

**CLAIMS:**

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A network switch stack configuration, said configuration comprising:

a first network switch comprising a plurality of data ports, a first stacking port, and a first CPU interface;

a second network switch having a plurality of data ports, a second stacking port, and a second CPU interface;

a common CPU connected to said first CPU interface and said second CPU interface;

wherein the first stacking port and the second stacking port are communicatively connected, such that incoming packets on any of the plurality of data ports on the first and second switches can be effectively switched to any of the plurality of data ports on either of the first and second network switches.

2. A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein said common CPU is configured to program functions on the first and second network switch, and wherein the common CPU controls communication between the first and second network switch.

3. A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein each of said first and second stacking ports include an arbiter thereupon, for allocating communication bandwidth between the first and second stacking port.

4. A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 1, wherein each of said first and second stacking ports includes flow control logic for controlling data flow to and from each of the first and second network switches, respectively.

5. A network switch stack configuration as recited in claim 3, wherein each arbiter is configured to alternate bandwidth access by alternating transmission and reception of data based upon a predetermined algorithm.

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